

## MERCATOR:

OR,

## Commerce Retrieved,

BEING

CONSIDERATIONS on the State of the *British* Trade, &c.

From Tuesday, September 29. to Thursday, October 1. 1713.

*The Guardian began the Debate of Trade Voluntier.**His Affirmation that France shall Import upon us 700,000 l. in Linen yearly, a groundless Mistake.**No such Quantity ever Imported.**No reason to fear the French Linen can hurt the Importation of Scots Linen.**The Scots carried on a great Trade in Linen to England, when the French Trade was open, and when they paid a great Duty in England: Why should they not do so now, when they pay no Duty at all?*

**T**HE *Guardian* having entred the Lists as a Voluntier, will not take it ill, that the *MERCATOR* singles him out to engage with him, when at the same time he thinks it not worth while to debate with, or so much as direct an Answer to the rest of the Writers, who oppose the Treaty.

As the *MERCATOR* treats the *Guardian* with all that Decency and Respect, which Men, that know what Decency and Respect means, ought to give; so yet he hopes the *Guardian* will allow him all the Liberty of Speech, which the Argument makes necessary.

The last *MERCATOR* laid down some Cases, in which he offers to prove the *Guardian* was MISTAKEN, and reason'd a little thereon; it is his Charity for the *Guardian*, that makes him believe what was said, will be convincing to him; and this Paper shall go on to acquaint him of yet greater MISTAKES.

The *Guardian* has laid down another Affirmative which the *MERCATOR* says cannot be right, (viz.) "That if the Duties on French Linen be reduced, it is to be feared it will come over so cheap that our Looms must be laid aside, and 6 or 700,000 l. a Year be sent over to France for that Commodity."

Now the *MERCATOR* undertakes to convince even the *Guardian* himself, that this is not to be feared, that it is not rational to fear it, and in short, that it CANNOT BE; and trusts to the Principles of Honour, which the *Guardian* has so often recommended to others, that he will practise so much of them himself, as to acknowledge it, if he is convinced, or say, if not, how it can be otherwise.

1. The *MERCATOR* says, there can be no Reason TO FEAR that we should send over such a Sum as 6 or 700,000 l. a Year for Linen, though all the *Guardian* suggests should be true.

2. The *MERCATOR* will endeavour to prove, that there is no Probability, that what the *Guardian* suggests, can come to pass; (viz.) Of laying our Linen Looms aside.

And if either of these be proved, much more if both, he hopes it will be effectually proved, that there is no Reason to fear, what the *Guardian* says is to be feared. And this is the Work that was undertaken.

1. By all the Arguments that were ever produced before, whether from the Custom-house, or

even those forged by Party-men to make these things swell and look big; no such Quantity of Linen, or to any Sum near it, has been pretended to be Imported from France in a Year.

Even the OLD SCHEME, which the Commissioners of the Customs declared to be Illegitimate, and which, by the Books of the Custom-house, has been proved to be erroneous, to the Value of 226,350 l. in that one Article of Linen only; even that SCHEME, I say, puts all the Linen Imported that Year at but 507,250 l. 4 s. from which deduct the Sum of 226,350 l. in Value, the whole Importation of the Year amounts to 280,900 l. 4 s. And though this is a very great Sum, and the Reasons are very good, why even this Sum can never be Imported again in a Year, as shall appear hereafter; yet this is sufficient to the present purpose, (viz.) to prove, that not only no such Sum as the *Guardian* mentions in Linen, was ever Imported into England in a Year, but that no Opposer of this Affair ever pretended to such a Sum since this Matter was in Debate, till the *Guardian* has now done it.

If then no such Quantity of Linen was ever known to be Imported from France into England in a Year, as could amount to such a Sum, the *MERCATOR* humbly conceives, there can be no good Reason TO FEAR that any such Quantity shall be Imported for the future.

The only way that the *MERCATOR* thinks remains to the *Guardian* to prove, what he has advanced is, that he should give us some good Reasons, why we ought to expect that MORE LINEN shall be Imported from France after this Treaty shall take place, than ever was before the Wars commenc'd.

But if, in the mean time, the *MERCATOR* should give good Reasons, why we ought to expect, that instead of More, there shall be MUCH LESS Imported than was before: then that Attempt will be anticipated: And this shall be done to the Satisfaction even of the *Guardian* himself, if he will be just and impartial.

1. The *Guardian* owns, that Scotland has made large Steps towards the Improvement of the Linen Manufacture. We will not dispute with him, how large those Steps are; we wish them to be much larger than they are; and perhaps he supposes them to be larger, than they really can be proved to be: But take it as he says it.

Before



Before the Union, as appears by the Acts of Parliament, a large Duty was paid upon Scots Linen; and yet when the French Trade was open, the Scots Linen was so much cheaper than the French, that we not only Imported very great Quantities of Scots Linen, but the Scots sent every Year great Quantities of their Linen into France; and the French Trade was so far from hindring our taking off the Scots Linen then, that the French themselves sent us every Year great Quantities of Scots Linen, which they brought from Scotland to France, and sold it to us.

For Proof of this, the *MERCATOR* refers to the Custom-house Books; whose Accounts, as laid before the Parliament, stand thus:

From Michaelmas 1685 to Michaelmas 1686,  
6702 Ells British Linen.

From Michaelmas 1686 to Michaelmas 1687,  
47532 Ells British Linen.

From Michaelmas 1687 to Michaelmas 1688,  
36307 Ells British Linen.

As to the Quantities of Linen, which we took Yearly directly from Scotland, the *MERCATOR* refers them to the Custom-House Books for the Quantity, having not the Particulars before him at this time, but believes, they will often amount to Thirty thousand Pound Sterling per Annum, and at the time of the making the Union it was Calculated in Scotland to the Parliament there, at Sixty thousand Pounds per Annum.

Now if over and above the very great Quantity we took from Scotland before, we also bought so much from the French, it was a clear Evidence, that the full Importation of French Linen, when it was at the highest, did not cause the Scots Looms to be laid aside: Why then, Mr. *Guardian*, should WE FEAR it will be so now. *But farther yet.*

Since the Union, the Duty upon Scots Linen, which was then considerable, is entirely taken off, and the Duties on French Linen are by the Treaty of Commerce to be augmented: Let the *Guardian* tell us, as before, whether that abatement of the Price on one hand, and that addition to the Price on the other, is a probable Means to cause more Linen to be Imported from France, or less for the time to come.

From these Premises the *MERCATOR* infers, (1.) That the Quantity of Linen, which shall come in from France, in Case the Treaty of Commerce with France shall be made Effectual, is very likely to be less than it was formerly. (2.) That if the Scots Linen was Imported in great Quantities before, it will be Imported in much greater Quantities now, because the Duties being taken off, the Linen will be Cheaper; and in all such Cases it is allow'd, that Cheapness causes Consumption.

But the *Guardian* himself furnishes us with another Reason, which we take *pro Confesso*, (viz.) That Scotland has made great Steps towards an Improvement in the Linen Manufactures: Had we not so good an Authority for this Assertion, the *MERCATOR* should have been too diffident of the Truth of the Fact to have af-

firmed it; but it is enough in this Case, that the *Guardian* no doubt knows the Truth of it.

Now if the full Importation of French Linen in former times, when the Scots Linen paid a great Duty, and before they were Improved in the Linen Trade, as the *Guardian* says they are now, did not hinder the said Scots Linen being brought into England; but, on the contrary, they made Linen so cheap in Scotland, as that they Exported it even to France it self: Why should we fear now, that the Looms in Scotland should be laid aside, and that we should send into France for that Linen, when Scotland is Improved in the making it?

By Improving a Manufacture, the *MERCATOR* supposes is understood, not the making a larger Quantity only, which would more properly be called Encreasing than Improving, but also making the Goods better and cheaper than before: Now if the Scots are thus Improved in the Linen, and make ~~one~~ it better than they did before, as we have shewn, it will be Cheaper: It would seem very hard, that it should be less probable to be Imported here, than it was when it was dearer in Price, as well as worse in Quality; and if the French Linen did not hinder its coming in here, when it was worse made, and dearer in Price, the *MERCATOR* cannot see the Reason, which the *Guardian* says there is to fear, that the Trade shall be stop't by the French.

At the same time there is to be added to this, that as the Scots Linen is CHEAPER, than it used to be, by the Duty being taken off, and BETTER than it used to be, by the Steps, which the *Guardian* says Scotland has made towards an Improvement; the French Linen must be Dearer, than it used to be, by the addition of the Duty which by the Treaty is now to be laid on, more than it formerly paid.

It is true, this is all included in what is said before; but the *MERCATOR* is obliged to repeat it for the sake of the less intelligent Readers, and especially for the sake of those, who are not so willing to understand it, as they are able.

It may be thought needful to enquire into the Difference, which will be made between the said Goods, by this taking off the Duty on one Side, and laying it on upon the other.

The *MERCATOR* has not room for the Particulars in this Paper; but in the general it will be found at least 2 d. in a Shilling, in the whole Difference from what it was when we Imported so much Scots Linen from France: And it seems very unlikely, that if the Trade was good before, it should be worse, when the Disadvantage of 2 d. in a Shilling lyes against France more than did before.

This 2 d. in the Shilling the *MERCATOR* reckons in the Canvas, Diapers, coarse Linens, which were the gross of the Quantities, which at any time come either from France or Scotland.

The *MERCATOR* thinks, he has Effectually proved what he undertook, (viz.) That there is no Reason to fear, that by reducing the Duties on the French Linen, as in the Treaty of Commerce, it should follow, that

Either our Looms should be laid aside,

Or 700,000 Pounds a Year be sent over to France to buy Linen; both which the *Guardian* has affirmed.

LUKE XIV. 6.

And they could not answer him again to these things.



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